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THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF DALLAS AREA RAPID TRANSIT

Zooming Toward a New Bus Network

Major service change scheduled for January 2022



Zooming Toward a New Bus Network

System redesign strives to increase ridership, protect coverage

In just eight months, DART expects to implement the work of the DARTzoom: A New Bus Network project. Unlike past bus planning that adjusted routes to serve new rail lines or developments, this new five-year bus service plan is a complete redesign of the bus network. Combined with restored light rail frequency, these changes will improve service and impact approximately 90% of our riders.

The DART Board of Directors reached a key decision in November 2020 when it unanimously adopted a board policy governing the balance of ridership and coverage.



The new five-year bus service plan, which will be implemented in January 2022, is a complete redesign of the bus network.

The policy directed the project team to develop a draft final bus network with 70%-75% of the service focused on high-ridership corridors. The remaining 25%-30% of resources is allocated for services that maximize coverage. This hybrid approach will include both fixed bus routes and greatly expanded GoLink service.

DART's long-term goal is to develop a transit system that can grow ridership over time by making the bus network more useful and reliable, while maintaining coverage for those who need access to public transit because they have no other means of transportation available.

"This mix allows DART to meet its social responsibility while also trying to increase use of the system," said Rob Smith, Interim Vice President of Planning and Development.

The agency's goal is to restore service to 100% of pre-pandemic levels on both bus and rail during the January 2022 service change. Service levels – which are defined by the number of operating hours, vehicle miles traveled, and costs associated in providing those services – will be determined by the funding allocated in DART's 20-Year Financial Plan and associated operating budgets.

Staff also are creating a second version of the bus service plan that includes even greater frequency and broader coverage options. If additional resources become available within the plan's five-year lifespan, the agency will add service.

Major route changes ahead

According to Smith, most of DART's regular, local, fixed-route bus service will be noticeably different.

"I can say that 100% of the bus routes will be affected in some way," Smith said.

With the planned changes, more than 74% of service-area residents will live within a half-mile of service, versus 68% for the current system.

Customers will see bus routes that serve new destinations, operate more hours, or have improved frequency. GoLink will cover new areas and/or replace fixed-route service that isn't performing well.

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Interactive Kiosks Empower Discovery

More installations near completion

DART customers soon will see interactive kiosks at more rail stations and bus transfer facilities.

Contractors have installed kiosks at 43 customer facilities as of March 1. Crews are in the process of installing units at 33 stations, which should be completed later this year. An additional 16 locations are in site review and planning.

Each transit facility will have one or more of these 9-foot towers, giving riders new ways to receive information about DART service and nearby destinations.

In total, DART plans to install at least 300 of these interactive systems at its rail stations and bus transfer facilities over the next few years. The agency has approached some of its community partners to identify locations where a DART kiosk could be installed on their properties.



Victory Station


LBJ/Central Station

"Our kiosks provide a digital signage function that allows us to convey more messages than we can with a traditional sign."
– Chief Marketing Officer Nevin Grinnell

Over the next few years, DART will finish installing at least 300 interactive digital kiosks at its rail stations and bus transit facilities to give riders new ways to receive information about DART service and explore nearby destinations.

QR codes enable touchless operation

Smart City Media, which manages the content, upgraded DART's system last summer with touchless mobile activation. Now, the interactive touch screens are navigable via smartphone through embedded QR codes for a touch-free experience.

DART has utilized the kiosks to provide information to riders throughout the coronavirus pandemic about cleaning processes, face mask requirements, social distancing and more. As information changes, the agency can push updated content electronically over the internet.

"Our kiosks provide a digital signage function that allows us to convey more messages than we can with a traditional sign," said Chief Marketing Officer Nevin Grinnell.

Interactive tools create customized content

Beyond digital signage, the kiosks display rail and bus schedules, offer wayfinding information and feature localized content. Categories range from nearby restaurants, shopping and entertainment venues to medical facilities and government offices. Customers can use the trip-planning

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Zooming Toward a New Bus Network

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Express bus routes and site-specific shuttles – like the partnerships with area universities and employers – will have only minor adjustments.

Currently, a lot of short feeder routes take people to a rail station or bus transit center. In the new bus network, DART will combine many of these short routes into longer ones with more crosstown functionality, while still getting riders to transit hubs.

The key characteristic of the new plan is improved frequency on more bus routes. DART has proposed increasing the number of high-frequency routes – which have 15-minute peak and 20-minute midday frequencies like light rail – from seven to 22. A larger percentage of routes will have 30-minute or 40-minute headways.

Increased frequency is key to ridership-focused bus service because it reduces wait times, thus speeding up trips, especially when transfers are involved. Roughly half of DART's customers transfer at least once to complete their journey. Frequency also increases job access because it expands the job opportunities that a person might reach in a reasonable amount of time while traveling by DART.

Public input shapes local service mix

Planning staff, assisted by transit planning consultants from Jarrett Walker + Associates, presented the draft bus service plan to the DART Board in March. The public input phase is underway with a mix of socially distanced tactics to gather input from riders.

DART has placed information on buses and trains, and utilized social and digital media, advertising and news coverage to distribute information. A series of virtual community meetings will culminate in a public hearing in June.

Based on the comments and feedback received, staff will update the bus service plan as needed. The DART Board is scheduled to review and approve the final plan in August.

The agency will need the following four months to complete the implementation activities required to convert the plan into reality by January and educate riders on the new service plan.

Learn more:

DARTzoom.org

Spring Valley Station



The key characteristic of the new bus service plan is improved frequency on more bus routes, which reduces wait times and speeds up trips, especially when transfers are involved.

GoLink Expansion Ahead

UNT Dallas Station



DART's GoLink service has grown and evolved since the program began in February 2018 with three zones each in southern Dallas and Plano.

"We consider GoLink an important part of the family of services that DART provides," said Rob Smith, Interim Vice President of Planning and Development.

The agency has proposed 28 DART-funded GoLink areas in the new bus service plan that will start January 2022. Some of the existing 15 zones will be expanded, and at least 13 new zones will be introduced to replace fixed-route bus service that is underperforming.

GoLink is a mobility-on-demand transit service powered by DART's GoPass® app. The service uses a mix of DART-branded vehicles and transportation network companies – such as taxis and Uber – to provide shared-ride transportation to DART customers within a designated boundary.

In some cases, the service works as first-mile/last-mile transportation. Customers schedule rides between their homes and a rail station or bus transit center, or between a DART hub and an employer or commercial area.

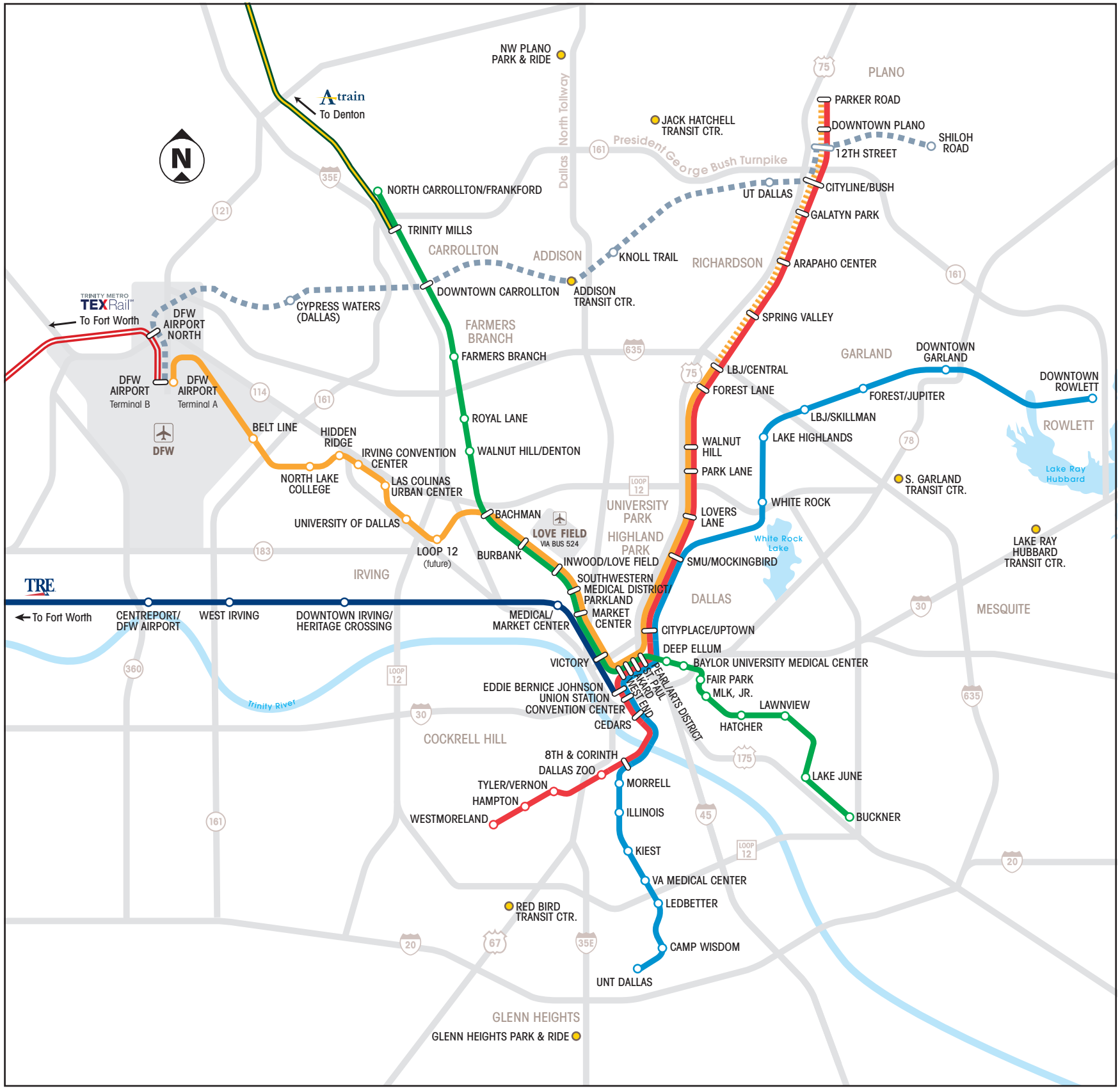
In other communities, like Rowlett, GoLink provides circulation within the zone, helping people go to places like medical appointments, shopping, work and lunch.

Before the pandemic, the Legacy West zone was the most active because GoLink fulfilled both purposes. Commuters used the service to travel between the Northwest Plano Park & Ride and nearby employers. Another group of riders rode GoLink to lunch and back within the Legacy Business Park and Legacy West areas.

Learn more:

DART.org/GoLink

DART Current and Future Rail Services



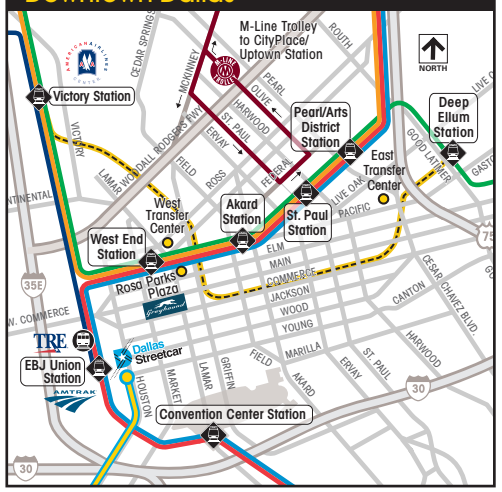
Map Legend

- Blue Line
- Red Line
- Green Line
- Orange Line
- Orange Line Weekdays Peak Only
- Trinity Railway Express (No Sunday Service)
- TEXRail (Trinity Metro)
- A-Train (DCTA)
- M-Line Trolley
- Dallas Streetcar

Inset Map

- Transit Center or Park & Ride

Downtown Dallas



Future Services

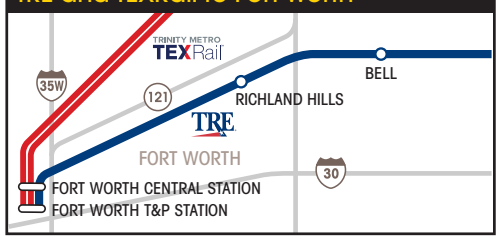
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY

- Silver Line (2023)

PLANNING/DESIGN UNDERWAY

- D2 Subway (Inset Map)

TRE and TEXRail to Fort Worth



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PUBLISHED APRIL 2021

122-0194-0221 CW

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Interactive Kiosks Empower Discovery

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feature to get transit or walking instructions and then send those directions to their smartphones.

The software can translate information into nine languages, and the customer interface complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Additionally, each unit includes security cameras, can broadcast emergency notifications, and soon will offer 5G connectivity, as well as public Wi-Fi to riders.

Partnerships expand customer resources

DART signed a master lease agreement with LD Flexgrid Dallas LLC – a joint venture of Landmark Infrastructure Partners LP and Smart City Media – for the design, installation and support of the interactive digital kiosks.

The project also includes installation of cell tower facilities on DART property and the addition of cellular service in the rail tunnel between the Mockingbird and Pearl/Arts District stations. In return, the LD Flexgrid Dallas partners will generate income from advertising on the kiosks' large display monitors and from cell tower leases to pay for the capital and operating costs.



Northwest Plano Park & Ride

On the Cover: Customers at the Northwest Plano Park & Ride can utilize the interactive digital kiosks to plan their trips when DART implements both major and minor changes in January 2022 to the bus routes, Express route, and GoLink that serve this West Plano transit hub.